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Chairman: Mr. MONGBE (Benin)

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AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (A/48/3, A/48/159-E/1993/59, A/48/172, A/48/182, A/48/183-E/1993/74 and Add.1, A/48/188-E/1993/78, A/48/276, A/48/338, A/48/353-S/26372, A/48/498)

1. Mr. DESAI (Under-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development), introducing the report of the Economic and Social Council (A/48/3), said that the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council had attracted high-level participation from some 35 Member States, reflecting the increasing interest of Member States in using the Council as a forum for policy dialogue on key issues of concern to the international community.

2. During the discussions of the high-level segment, which was devoted to the topic "World Summit for Social Development, including the role of the United Nations system in promoting social development", a wide-ranging review took place of the issues of poverty, employment and social integration and questions were raised about the traditional approaches and solutions to the problem of development. As one speaker had pointed out, after 50 years of experience, it was still not certain that the right answers had been found.

3. A significant development was the unanimous and forthright political support shown for the Summit, including that of some major countries which had earlier been reluctant to accept the idea.

4. Two distinct strands of thinking had emerged from the debate: one emphasizing policies for social development and the other stressing a more fundamental review of institutions that would facilitate greater social cohesion in a new era of uncertainty.

5. The complementary role of the State and the functioning of markets to put people first was also highlighted. In addition to acting to protect the welfare of vulnerable groups, which was an essential function, the State should create the conditions for addressing the problems of poverty, unemployment, social integration and sustainable development. At the same time, there was general acceptance of the essential function of the market and of private investment in the allocation of resources and the creation of wealth. Ways could be found of addressing the interaction between the State's social functions, market responses to social demands and the imperatives of sustainable development. There was general agreement that pragmatic solutions without preconceived ideological notions were what was needed. It was also clear that, given the broad nature of social development, it was necessary to examine its economic underpinnings and political dimensions, including the extent to which those two aspects could be incorporated in the analysis of the Summit's three themes.

6. The coordination segment was devoted to the themes of humanitarian assistance and the eradication of malaria and diarrhoeal diseases, in particular cholera. The Council welcomed the Secretary-General's reports, which had been prepared using contributions from the organizations of the system. The Council's conclusions were largely based on the recommendations in those reports. In the case of humanitarian assistance, stress was laid on the need to strengthen the coordinating role of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs.

(Mr. Desai)

7. The formal and informal discussions on operational activities had demonstrated the advantage of the Council as a forum for elaborating and clarifying concepts that were often clouded. General Assembly resolutions 44/211, of 22 December 1989, and 47/199, of 22 December 1992, resolution 1993/7 of the Economic and Social Council, together with the reforms currently being negotiated, offered a rich body of legislation to ensure that United Nations funds and agencies could meet host country needs for technical cooperation in an integrated, non-duplicative and mutually reinforcing manner.

8. The two key concepts on which those resolutions were based were the need for increased, stable and assured financing and the need to tailor a coherent response to pressing national priorities. The programme approach, national execution and the Country Strategy Note were part of a cohesive whole and had one important commonality: they defined the demand-driven approach to multilateral development cooperation.

9. The recipient countries must define for themselves how to maximize the multiplier effects, as well as the areas where United Nations technical cooperation was best utilized; the United Nations should provide the bridging arrangement used in translating inter-connected policy frameworks on matters such as the environment, poverty alleviation and human development into action at the country level.

10. With its adoption of resolutions 1988/77 and 1989/114, the Council had started the process of revitalization. The Assembly itself had launched a far-reaching restructuring of the Council in its resolution 45/264 of 13 May 1991. It was evident that Member States were still not fully satisfied with the way the Council was functioning and were still seeking a formula to ensure that the Council was capable of carrying out the responsibilities envisaged for it in the Charter in the field of economic and social development. Consequently, the Assembly's current efforts to agree on new measures for restructuring and revitalizing the Council, in particular the recommendations in the draft resolution currently before it, were of the utmost importance.

11. Because of its smaller size, the Council could be better placed than the Assembly, whose universal personality gave it a special role in policy formulation, to carry out coordination and management responsibilities more effectively, as well as to undertake policy dialogue at the point where monitoring, coordination and management functions intersected.

12. In respect of coordination and management, the Council could also play an important role in establishing inter-agency linkages. Similarly, in the management of the various commissions and committees which made up its subsidiary machinery, the Council should seek to identify such interlinkages, promote a synthesis and act as a corrective mechanism when subsidiary bodies dealing with related themes were proceeding in contrary directions. The Council must change and adapt its way of business. The effective discharge of that responsibility was vital, not just to revitalize the Council itself but to ensure that economic and social development played a central role in the work of the United Nations.

13. Mr. JOSEPH (Representative of the Director-General of the World Health Organization) introduced the report of the Director-General on the implementation of the global strategy for the prevention and control of acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) (A/48/159).

14. In regard to the HIV/AIDS pandemic, he noted that, as of mid-1993, the number of adults and children infected with HIV world wide had reached 14 million. Of that total, more than 2.5 million had gone on to develop AIDS. The number of adults alive with HIV infection was about 11 million. The most seriously affected region continued to be sub-Saharan Africa, with more than 8 million infected adults. However, the biggest increase in the last year had been in Latin America and South and South-East Asia, each with more than 1.5 million adult infections.

15. World wide, about 75 per cent of infections to date had been acquired through sexual intercourse and heterosexual transmission was on the rise. Five out of eleven newly infected adults were women. The vulnerability of youth was becoming clear, since about one half of HIV infections had occurred in young persons under 25 years of age.

16. By the year 2000, WHO estimated that there would be a cumulative total of 30 to 40 million HIV infections in men, women and children, of which more than 90 per cent would be in developing countries. The projected cumulative total of adult AIDS cases was close to 10 million. The increasing numbers of people with HIV infection and of AIDS patients was placing overwhelming stress on already fragile health systems. By the year 2000, developing countries would spend over US$ 1 billion per year on health care for AIDS.

17. The cost for individual families was even more devastating. By the time parents died, their children and elderly dependants were often deeply impoverished because of the costs in time and money of caring for someone with AIDS. As the pandemic advanced, HIV infection, by depressing the body's immune response, was leading to a host of other diseases, each with their own set of consequences. For example, there had been an alarming increase in cases of tuberculosis in parallel with the AIDS epidemic in many countries. As HIV infection was responsible for the increasing number of tuberculosis cases, one of the best means for slowing the growth of the tuberculosis pandemic was to prevent HIV infection.

18. Epidemiologically, therefore, the international community was faced with two key challenges. In those countries where HIV had arrived early in the pandemic, there was a need to provide care and support to the growing number of AIDS patients and to deal with the social and economic consequences of their illness, while at the same time accelerating prevention efforts. In countries where HIV was relatively new, there was the challenge of preventing the type of serious epidemic that had occurred elsewhere.

19. A recent study published by WHO had shown that investment of US$ 2.5 billion per year in sound prevention efforts could halve the number of new HIV infections in the developing world by the year 2000. For that to be achieved, there was a need for increased political commitment, for a greater multisectoral response and for more involvement of communities and community-based organizations in the related control efforts.

(Mr. Joseph)

20. Addressing the issue of coordination within the United Nations system, he said that in May 1993, the World Health Assembly, at its forty-sixth session, had adopted a resolution requesting the Director-General of WHO to study the feasibility of establishing a joint and co-sponsored United Nations programme on HIV/AIDS, in close collaboration with the Executive Heads of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Bank.

21. According to the resolution, such a programme should be designed to provide the sponsoring agencies with technical, strategic and policy direction; to collaborate with other organizations of the United Nations system, with Governments and with non-governmental organizations on matters related to HIV and AIDS; and to strengthen the capacity of Governments to coordinate HIV/AIDS activities at country level. The study in question was to be submitted to the Executive Board of WHO in January 1994.

22. The Governing Councils of UNDP and UNFPA had endorsed the resolution, and the Economic and Social Council, in resolution 1993/51, had emphasized its full support for the WHO resolution and called upon the executive heads of the potential sponsoring agencies to cooperate fully in the process.

23. The very request for the study was a clear recognition that the struggle against the pandemic could not be divided among organizations and sectors. It was as much a challenge to the health sector to expand into other areas as it was a call to other sectors to participate in disease control activities. The United Nations system must follow the same advice it was giving national Governments, in other words, it must develop a comprehensive, well-managed response that was as resilient and multifaceted as the disease it purported to control.

24. The process outlined in the resolution was well under way. Since May 1993, six meetings of representative of the sponsors had been held. The agencies had been delineating basic principles, as well as shaping options for the programme's structure and function and analysing the needs created by the pandemic. As requested in the World Health Assembly resolution, before the study was completed, advice would be sought from the Inter-Agency Advisory Group on AIDS and the Task Force on HIV/AIDS Coordination established by the Management Committee of the Global Programme on AIDS.

25. He was convinced that, if the same spirit of collaboration continued, a joint programme had great potential to rationalize and improve the individual and collective efforts of the organizations involved. A joint United Nations system programme on HIV and AIDS offered a unique opportunity to move substantially forward - at the global as well as the country level - within the context of the global AIDS strategy.

26. Mr. KINLOCH (Deputy Assistant Administrator, Regional Bureau for Africa, United Nations Development Programme), introducing the report (A/48/498) requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 46/204, of 20 December 1991, on special assistance to Namibia, pointed out that the Committee for Development Planning would be submitting full recommendations to the General Assembly at its

(Mr. Kinloch)

forty-ninth session, after reviewing Namibia's need for special assistance. Following the granting of "as if" least developed country status to Namibia, UNDP had been able to allocate for the fifth programming cycle in respect of Namibia's first country programme US$ 15 million, which was more than would have been allocated without the special status. UNDP had further recommended that other United Nations agencies and funds should do the same. Thus, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) had granted Namibia US$ 1.2 million, and a number of Governments had provided US$ 1.2 million in the form of third-party cost sharing.

27. Other specialized funds from which Namibia could benefit under the resolution were the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) and the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office (UNSO). Given the resource constraints of those two funds, their contributions were not likely to be substantial. Moreover, the mandate of UNSO restricted its action to the Sudano-Sahelian region. It had been expected that Namibia would, by the existence of resolution 46/204, be able to mobilize loans on concessionary terms. So far, however, Namibia had not committed itself to any structural adjustment programme, and could therefore not obtain IDA loans on concessionary terms. The World Bank did not recognize Namibia as having least developed country status. The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) was hoping to conclude an agreement with the Namibian Government for a US$ 12.5 million loan on soft terms. The African Development Fund had recently concluded an agreement for a soft loan of 36 million Namibian dollars to support the development of education.

28. The factors that had led to the resolution were long lasting, and the per capita income distribution in the country ranged from US$ 85 to US$ 16,600, with over two thirds of the population living in absolute poverty. It was therefore obvious that the international community should continue to provide assistance to Namibia in order to enable the nation to maintain a reasonable basis for its future development.

29. Mr. RAO (Executive Director, United Nations Centre for Human Settlements), introducing the report (A/48/183-E/1993/74 and Add.1) requested by the General Assembly in resolution 47/170 of 22 December 1992 on assistance to the Palestinian people, said that, in compliance with that resolution, he had collected the pertinent information from the various sources concerned and the replies received were summarized in the report.

30. Mr. WIDYONO (Chief, Regional Commissions New York Office) introduced the report contained in document A/48/188, which had been prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 47/172 of 22 December 1992 and was based on a study by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA).

31. The building of settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory had accelerated since the beginning of 1990. Since mid-1992, two main political issues were supposed to have a direct impact on the pace of Israeli settlement in the occupied Arab territories: one was the formation, in July 1992, of a new Government, which had announced its willingness to put an end to the construction of housing in the occupied Palestinian territories; the other was the American loan guarantees for Israel, which had been approved on

6 October 1992. Construction of settlements was not "frozen", since the Israeli Government remained committed to the construction of 11,000 additional housing units. Moreover, as mentioned in the report, settlement in greater Jerusalem and along the borders with the Syrian Arab Republic and Jordan would not be affected by any future settlement policy, as the Prime Minister of Israel had declared. It was nearly impossible to determine the source of funding of settlements, since the Israeli Government and the Jewish Agency could free funds for use in the occupied territories by using money obtained under the United States loan guarantees for projects inside Israel's pre-1967 borders.

32. Water continued to be one of the most sensitive issues affecting the economic and social development of the people in the occupied Arab territories. During the period under consideration, the Israeli authorities had gained control over water resources in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Syrian Golan, and more than 67 per cent of the water supply in the area was exploited for the benefit of the non-Palestinian population. That water policy and the confiscation of land to establish or expand settlements had been accompanied by the imposition of curfews on various areas of the occupied Palestinian territories in order to prevent clashes between Palestinians and Israeli settlers. During the first four months of 1993, approximately 3,180 trees had been uprooted in the occupied Arab territories because the landowners had failed to obtain permits to plant the seedlings from the Israel Land Administration. All those measures had significantly affected the economic and social development of the Palestinian people, especially in the agricultural and industrial sectors.

33. It was to be hoped that, with the agreement on mutual recognition between the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel of 13 September 1993, the dispute on Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories could be ended.

34. The CHAIRMAN announced the opening of the general debate on agenda item 12.

35. Mr. JARAMILLO (Colombia), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said he wished to refer to the restructuring of the economic and social sector, financing of operational activities, inter-agency coordination, humanitarian assistance and expert bodies.

36. The Group of 77 and China were most interested in achieving the objectives of the restructuring of the economic and social sector, as evidenced by their contribution to the consensus achieved on the substantive elements to improve the distribution of work between the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the governing bodies. Only one element, the size of governing bodies, remained to be negotiated in order to make the substance of the reform operative. The Group of 77 and China had recently introduced draft resolution A/47/L.58/Rev.1, which included a compromise formula on the issue. Although the proposal was acceptable to the large majority of Member States, the sponsors had agreed to a request for an extension of the deadline from a group of delegations which wished to hold further consulations, and they were still awaiting the reactions of that group. The urgenct need to implement the substance of the reform confirmed that the agreed deadline was the maximum allowable for taking action on the matter. It was essential that at the next session of the Economic

(Mr. Jaramillo, Colombia)

and Social Council and of the Second Committee the significant improvements set out in the draft resolution to which he had referred should be implemented. The sponsors trusted that the extension of the deadline would make it possible to find points of agreement in those areas in which there was still some disagreement, so that on the 30 November deadline, it would not be necessary to adopt a decision by majority.

37. It was important to note that the volume of financial support provided by the industrialized world to the operational activities of the United Nations had declined. That was a paradoxical situation in view of the repeated declarations of support made by donors regarding the development objectives of the Organization. The paradox was even greater given the renewed commitment of the developing world to improve the management of operational activities in all their aspects.

38. With regard to coordination among the organizations and agencies of the system, which was a crucial element in that management, he pointed out that recent decisions of the General Assembly, especially resolution 47/199, had substantially improved the legal framework to make coordination more effective and operative. The Secretariat's efforts should be oriented towards implementing that legal framework, and not towards introducing political elements alien to the subject of coordination which hampered the urgent action of the United Nations in the developing world. The political dimension was not only irrelevant to the issue but was a factor which seriously undermined relations between the United Nations and the developing world.

39. On the question of humanitarian assistance, he said that coordination in emergency situations should be entrusted to the resident representative of the agency whose mandate most closely approximated the needs of the crisis and whose specialization clearly gave it a comparative advantage. The Secretary-General, through the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, should make the decision and set the guidelines for coordination among the agencies without getting involved in the operational phase. The coordinator should play a fundamental role in rehabilitation and in the development process following an emergency. That point must be emphasized, given that the massive aid provided to countries stricken by a disaster usually ended when the critical moment of the emergency was over.

40. The Group of 77 and China wished to express their satisfaction at the important contribution which the Economic and Social Council had made at its recent session in its analysis of the functioning of expert bodies. They hoped that that analysis would help to improve the efficiency of those bodies.

41. Mr. PETERS (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Community and its member States, noted that, following the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council in July 1993, the practice of holding a high-level segment and a coordination segment had been well established, and was beginning to yield practical results. With regard to the coordination segment, the discussions on the coordination of humanitarian assistance and on the campaign against malaria and diarrhoeal diseases had been satisfactory. Although the conclusions reached might have been more specific, they were realistic and could serve as guidelines for concerned parties within the United Nations system.

(Mr. Peters, Belgium)

42. The debates during the high-level segment, on the other hand, had remained excessively formal and had not yet met the expectation that a true political dialogue on the issues addressed would be instituted. The dialogue with the international financial institutions, in particular, which was very useful with a view to maintaining a proper division of labour between those institutions and the United Nations, had contained both valid and routine elements; that, regrettably, represented a step backwards compared with the previous year.

43. Thus, although those aspects of the reform of the Council which were already in effect had yielded encouraging results, some still had to be implemented. First, the choice of topic for the high-level and coordination segments was to be made during the Council's organizational session, and the Council's competence must be respected. The choice should be made on a consensus basis, maintaining a balance between the economic and social sectors, the priorities of various groups and the relevance of the issues, which could not be identified several years in advance. Second, it was important to ensure the implementation of the agreed conclusions, which must be followed by all the administrative decisions required to give them effect.

44. The work of the Economic Committee during the July session had been slow and often difficult, mainly because of the lack of both substantive and budgetary documentation, and the form in which various subsidiary bodies had submitted their reports to the Council. Those bodies should follow a more uniform procedure and indicate clearly the areas where they were requesting the Council to adopt policy decisions. The Council could not blindly support conclusions or recommendations the implications, including budgetary implications, of which were unclear, nor could it negotiate texts that assumed technical expertise it did not possess. That applied in particular to the Committee on Natural Resources and the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, although the reports of the regional commissions presented similar difficulties. The Council should provide all such bodies with clearer guidelines in that respect.

45. The organizational problems which had been universally experienced during the substantive session of the Council clearly showed that the reform process, halted in mid-stream, should go forward and should be concluded within the time-limit established by the General Assembly.

46. To date, the Council had adopted a total of 192 resolutions and decisions during its 1993 sessions, compared to 168 adopted in 1992. The new methods of work, which he hoped would be applied to the work of the Council as a whole beginning the following year, would require the number of texts to be limited and the division of labour between the Council and the Second Committee to be more carefully respected. Unfortunately, it was necessary once again to return to the matter of the late distribution of documentation since, despite constant appeals by Member States, the situation had only deteriorated, to the point that during the 1993 substantive session of the Council some documents had been distributed after the debate had begun. While Member States must show greater discipline in requesting new reports from the Secretariat, the Secretariat had primary responsibility in that area. It should be pointed out, as had already been done the previous year during the debate on the same item in the Second Committee, that brief and high-quality reports were needed. The tendency

(Mr. Peters, Belgium)

towards encyclopaedic documents needlessly increased the workload of the translation and printing services and of delegations, too. The European Community and its member States hoped, therefore, that reforms in the Secretariat would result in a swift improvement in the situation.

47. Mr. GONZALEZ (Chile) noted the difficulties caused by late distribution of documentation and reiterated his concern at the lack of results in the negotiations on the restructuring of the Economic and Social Council, in particular the delay in the submission of proposed amendments to draft resolution A/47/L.58/Rev.1. He trusted that the deadline would be met, given that amendments were to be limited to the function and size of the administrative organs.

48. At its latest substantive session, the Council had examined and evaluated for the first time the results of the work of the subsidiary bodies restructured pursuant to General Assembly resolution 46/235 of 13 April 1992. The work of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development had been given new impetus by the reforms which had been adopted. However, despite the priority which developing countries attached to socio-economic issues, serious difficulties persisted with regard to the financing of activities. Those countries had an interest in bringing to the attention of the industrialized world the importance of technology transfer. The debate on the programme of work for the biennium 1994-1995 should therefore focus on the fundamental role of science and technology for development.

49. Coordination of activities in the economic and social spheres should also be improved. In addition to the persistent duplication in the consideration of those items in the Economic Committee and the Social Committee of the Council and in the Second and Third Committees of the General Assembly there was further duplication of work in the various bodies. The implementation of the guidelines for the framework of the Council and the Second Committee could ensure improved coordination without further expenditure.

50. Mr. KRUEGER (Austria) said that his delegation had been heartened by the way in which the high-level segment, the coordination segment and the operational activities segment had unfolded during the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council. While there was scope for further improvement, the reforms introduced pursuant to General Assembly resolution 45/264 of 13 May 1991 had enhanced the Council's ability to discharge its mandate. The further reforms envisaged in draft resolution A/47/L.58/Rev.1 were also a step in the right direction.

51. The Council had taken more seriously its function of supervising its various subsidiary bodies and coordinating and integrating their recommendations. Its consideration of the reports of those bodies had reaffirmed the value of those recommendations.

52. Austria believed that the Council was plagued by a proliferation and fragmentation of reports. Efforts should be made to streamline the reports and reduce their number; some could be presented biennially and others could be discontinued. Furthermore, the Council's coordination and policy functions could be greatly enhanced through appropriate categorization of data. Austria

(Mr. Krueger, Austria)

hoped that the "policy reports" issued by the United Nations Secretariat would lead to the publication of a comprehensive report on the state of the environment and development which would provide the basis for policies and priorities related to United Nations system activities in the field of sustainable development and offer clear choices to the multitude of governmental and non-governmental agencies in the economic and social fields.

53. Mr. NEBENZIA (Russian Federation) commended the work of the Economic and Social Council at its 1993 substantive session. The new division of its work into high-level, coordination and operational activities segments permitted the consideration of issues that should be coordinated at the system-wide level and enhanced the Council's efficiency. At the current session of the General Assembly, a consensus could be achieved on the proposal that the Economic Committee and the Social Committee should be merged beginning with the 1994 session. That merger, in addition to enhancing the importance of the high-level and coordination segments, would allow more time for the consideration of operational activities. The high-level segment had been the most intellectual component of the session, in view of the participation of senior officials and the useful deliberations on the World Summit for Social Development. At that forum, a humanitarian agenda and a multisectoral approach should be worked out in order to resolve the problems in the area of development.

54. There was need for broad coordination of the policies of the specialized agencies of the United Nations system, a factor which was very important in terms of comparative advantage, whereby some agencies provided economic assistance while others helped to resolve social and humanitarian problems. Such an approach would permit the Economic Committee and the Social Committee to be merged for plenary meetings.

55. The series of meetings on operational activities would be of fundamental importance for the social and economic activities of the United Nations, since it would help to improve the management and supervision of all operational activities in the system.

56. Note should be taken of the Council's resolutions on the scientific and technological aspects of the conversion of military capacity for civilian use and for sustainable development, international cooperation to combat the effects of the Chernobyl accident, and the strengthening of the regional commissions.

57. Reforms must be aimed at providing practical guidance for the overall work of the Council; a more important role must also be assigned to the organizational session, whose basic function was to prepare the programme of work for the substantive session, particularly the selection of items for the high-level and coordination segments.

58. An important issue for the Council's work was the timely preparation of documentation, since the lack of information reduced the possibility of giving in-depth consideration to agenda items and made it necessary to change the dates of meetings. He hoped that the Secretariat would take the necessary steps to correct that situation.

59. Mr. KHANI (Syrian Arab Republic), referring to the Arab population of the occupied territories, condemned the Israeli practices of exploiting resources and restricting agricultural activities, which were serious violations of Security Council resolutions 446 (1979) and 465 (1980), as well as of the Geneva and Hague Conventions.

60. In document A/48/188-E/1993/78, the Secretary-General had drawn attention to the arbitrary practices of confiscating land and gaining control of water resources in the Syrian Arab Golan, which had reduced the area under cultivation, and had curtailed local development potential and lowered the local income level from agriculture.

61. The Government of Israel was currently constructing 1,200 housing units in the Golan Heights. During the first five months of the current year, 3,381 dunums had been confiscated. The objective of the policy on water resources was to exhaust the water systems and reduce agricultural and livestock production, with the attendant grave consequences for the Arab population. In addition, the Israeli authorities had uprooted fruit trees and had dumped toxic wastes which had contaminated soils and polluted the environment.

62. The Golan would continue to be a victim of suppression and oppression until the occupation was brought to an end. The international community must immediately take the necessary measures to ensure that Israel complied with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and observed the provisions of the Geneva and Hague Conventions as well as international agreements on economic, social and cultural rights.

63. Mr. BIAOU (Benin) said that the conclusions of the Council's high-level segment, which had considered the question of the World Summit on Social Development, including the role of the United Nations system in promoting social development, would serve as a reference and inspiration to guide the work of the substantive session of the Preparatory Committee of the World Summit for Social Development to be held in 1994.

64. Benin attached vital importance to the Council's high-level segments, and sincerely hoped that the topics to be considered in 1994 and 1995 would arouse in all delegations the same interest which they currently evoked, and that the concrete recommendations and proposals formulated during those segments would be translated into achievements that were of benefit to the United Nations system and its Member States.

65. The coordination segment had focused on two key issues: coordination of humanitarian relief and emergency assistance and the continuation of such action as part of rehabilitation and development efforts, on the one hand, and coordination of the activities of the United Nations system in the area of preventive action and intensification of efforts to combat malaria and diarrhoeal diseases, particularly cholera, on the other.

66. The conclusions of the discussions on emergency assistance underscored the fact that the development agencies concerned should organize reform programmes aimed, in particular, at changing their basic infrastructure. It was also necessary to elaborate regional and international strategies aimed at coordinating appropriate measures to prevent the spread of such diseases.

(Mr. Biaou, Benin)

67. The 1994 substantive session should therefore specify the Council's objectives, work plans and programmes; allocate the necessary resources to achieve those goals; and define the supportive functions of the relevant United Nations agencies to facilitate improved coordination of the activities of the international community.

68. In order to achieve the most rational internal organization of work, resolutions which had been adopted without a vote in the Economic and Social Committees should not be discussed at length later in informal consultations, which would constitute a major step forward and facilitate the division of tasks between the Second Committee of the General Assembly and the Council.

69. The division of labour between the two organs would be determined following the adoption of draft resolution A/47/L.58/Rev.1, concerning further measures for the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields. The Council would no longer be the consulting chamber in which the temperature of the debates was taken, and the Second Committee would cease to function as a sick bay in which intramuscular and intravenous injections were administered. Instead, each organ would carry out the functions and mandates stipulated in the Charter of the United Nations.

70. Mr. GOUDIMA (Ukraine) said that, despite the end of the cold war, the world remained polarized and the gap between rich and poor countries continued to widen. Poverty and underdevelopment created instability, conflicts and wars which were a threat to international peace and security. The restructuring and revitalization of the Economic and Social Council were therefore of increasing importance in order to intensify the Council's efforts to improve international economic relations. The Council should therefore change the focus of its mission and undertake programmes and activities for the benefit of all countries and not merely to satisfy the public relations needs of a handful of countries.

71. The Ad Hoc Working Group, whose work was geared towards that objective, had formulated useful proposals to promote the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields. Unfortunately, their negotiations had not been a complete success. The Group should resume its work and focus its activities on the formulation of effective and global proposals that would benefit all countries.

72. Serious consideration should be given to the possibility of the Economic and Social Council reporting in a comprehensive manner to the Security Council on all questions affecting international peace and security as well as to the establishment of flexible inter-sessional machinery to deal appropriately with the new developments that continually arose.

73. The 1993 substantive session had been notable for its initiation of far-reaching changes. Most Member States had sought to revitalize and intensity the work of the Economic and Social Council, as had been most evident during the high-level segment with the establishment of guidelines intended to tackle fundamental problems in the sphere of economic and social development. The high-level segment should be made one of the basic elements of the Council, together with a free, unofficial exchange of views among Member States on sustainable development.

(Mr. Goudima, Ukraine)

74. Such exchanges should also be strengthened through the coordination, not only of the policies and activities of the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system connected with humanitarian assistance, but also of activities in connection with the prevention of dangerous illnesses, taking account of the limited resources available in those areas, where sound organization was essential to avoid duplication and to improve the effectiveness of the United Nations system in general.

75. Account must also be taken of the meetings on operational activities. He noted the importance of General Assembly resolution 47/199, of 22 December 1992, on the triennial policy review of operational activities for development within the United Nations system and stressed the need to avoid any conflicts between operational activities and activities relating to the maintenance and strengthening of peace.

76. Recognition must be given at the session to the fact that the unhindered implementation of operational activities must also take due account of the interests of all countries, including the transition economies.

77. He noted with satisfaction that at the substantive session important decisions and resolutions of a practical nature had been adopted on the basis of reports such as those submitted by the Commission on Transnational Corporations, the Committee on Natural Resources, the Commission on Science and Technology for Development and the Statistical Commission.

78. It was also important that international cooperation and coordination had been strengthened in terms of efforts to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster, and that international approval had been given for preventive action against and control of the acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS).

79. His delegation regretted that it had not been able to study the contents of the report of the Council until the last moment and that it had been impossible to prepare adequately for its detailed consideration. Nevertheless it was quite evident that it indicated very positive attainments and reflected a desire to better distribute the work of the agencies of the United Nations system, non-governmental organizations and the various countries. He trusted that the delay had been due to circumstances and would not become a normal practice.

80. Ms. YANG Yanyi (China) said that the Economic and Social Council was perhaps the United Nations organ that had received the least attention during the cold war years. Nevertheless, with economic and social development established as necessary for conditions of lasting global peace and security, it must now receive more attention.

81. The role of the Economic and Social Council within the United Nations would indicate the ability of the Organization to meet the demands of the post-cold-war period. It was true that the United Nations must first find a way to contain tension, conflict and bloodshed throughout the world, but there was no doubt that for the overwhelming majority of countries economic development was a more important and urgent task. Therefore it was essential for the United

(Ms. Yang Yanyi, China)

Nations to discharge its functions in the field of international cooperation for development.

82. At the 1993 substantive session a high-level policy dialogue had been held on the growing problems of social development.

83. The guidance provided by the Council for its subsidiary organs and coordination between them had improved and there was increased awareness of the importance of a division of labour and efficiency.

84. It was of great importance that the Commission on Sustainable Development had been established and that the operational machinery was now in place for the monitoring and promotion of the implementation of Agenda 21.

85. Her delegation trusted that draft resolution A/47/L.58/Rev.1, which reaffirmed the principles and objectives of the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic and social and related spheres, and drew attention to the requirements of the developing countries, could be adopted by consensus.

86. The high-level segment of the substantive session should retain its role as an important forum for policy dialogue on major issues of economic and social development. She hoped that the macroeconomic themes of most concern to the international community, and in particular the developing countries, would be discussed.

87. The strengthening of development coordination, particularly in the field of science and technology, should be a matter of priority for the Council, since science and technology played an ever more important role in global economic competition. With the emergence of new technologies, the world was witnessing a wage of structural adjustments and industrial transformations which had resulted in new patterns of division of labour and provided developing countries with opportunities to participate in modern industrial production with new technologies. But today's new technologies, particularly the key technologies, were controlled by the developed countries, and most developing countries lacked the ability to introduce and utilize them. In order to breach the huge gap between the South and North and help developing countries acquire, master and utilize science and technology, the Council and its subsidiary organs should strengthen their coordination in that field.

88. Further, given that the lack of financial resources had hampered the smooth functioning of multilateral technical cooperation in the United Nations and the implementation of the instruments established pursuant to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), the Council should devise practical measures to solve those problems so that United Nations activities in the economic and social fields would keep up with the times.

89. Mr. LUEDIG (Estonia) proposed the postponement of the deadline for the submission of drafts under sub-item 91 (j): Integration of the economies in transition into the world economy, from 1 p.m. on Tuesday, 19 October, to 6 p.m.

(Mr. Luedig, Estonia)

on Friday, 22 October, to allow the continued holding of formal and informal consultations involving the potential sponsors.

90. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection to the proposal from Estonia, he would take it that the Committee wished to proceed accordingly.

91. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
13th meeting
held on
Tuesday, 19 October 1993
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 13th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MONGBE (Benin)

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AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued)

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Distr. GENERAL
A/C.2/48/SR.13
5 November 1993

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

93-81678 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued) (A/48/3, A/48/159-E/1993/59, A/48/172, A/48/182, A/48/183-E/1993/74 and Add.1, A/48/188-E/1993/78, A/48/276, A/48/338, A/48/353-S/26372, A/48/484-S/26552, A/48/498)

1. Mr. BAILLARGEON (Canada) said that true reform of the economic and social sector of the United Nations must involve not only a revision of the structure of the Economic and Social Council but a fundamental analysis culminating in the initiative for an agenda for development. Just as the report entitled "An Agenda for Peace" had revitalized the role of the United Nations in matters involving peace and political security, so the agenda for development must have a reforming influence on the economic and social sectors.

2. The restructuring process must continue. Positive results had come from the format of the coordination and high-level segment and the former could be further improved. A method must be found to bring about a real exchange of views among delegations. A key question that had been raised concerned the type of relationship needed between the Council and the organs it supervised. The Council's supervisory role must be clarified, which involved agreeing on the extent to which it should revise the reports submitted to it. In examining the technical recommendations contained in such reports, the Council should concentrate on their potential impact on coordination of the activities of the various organs in the system. It should also ensure that the policy direction and orientation adopted were actually honoured by its subsidiary organs. Its role in reviewing the financial implications of the decisions referred to it should be scrutinized very carefully. It should not assume the task of reviewing the technical content of those reports, just as subsidiary organs should not request the Council to endorse sections or recommendations requiring specialized expertise. In seeking to reform its decision-making process, the Council should reinforce constructive partnerships with actors outside the United Nations system, including research and non-governmental organizations. His Government welcomed the decision to create an open-ended working group to examine how the Economic and Social Council could enhance its relations with non-governmental organizations.

3. The task of rethinking an economic and social sector that would enable the United Nations to play a more active role was not an easy one, but failure would mean increased marginalization, and Canada attached too great an importance to the Organization to allow that to happen.

4. Mr. HUSLID (Norway), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said that they wished to stress the need for economic assistance to the Palestinian people. The signing of the Declaration of Principles by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization represented an historical breakthrough, however if the peace process was to succeed, it must be accompanied and strengthened by economic development. Peace would not flourish unless the international community rapidly committed resources to its realization. The dual task of providing much-needed short-term aid and building the basis for achieving long-term development goals must be accomplished in order to maintain broad popular support for the Declaration. One of the main objectives should be to assist the Palestinian people in establishing the necessary institutions and

(Mr. Huslid, Norway)

conditions for taking charge of their own development. Although the Declaration of Principles applied only to the West Bank and Gaza, the needs of the hundreds of thousands of Palestinians confined to camps in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria could not be ignored.

5. The recent donor conference had resulted in pledges totalling approximately 2 billion dollars. The Nordic countries were pleased with its outcome, which represented a vital step in the follow-up to the peace process. The pledges must next be translated into concrete activities to improve the living conditions of the Palestinian people. An efficient and functional coordinating structure for international assistance must put the funds to work immediately and to maximize their total impact. The World Bank should continue to play its important and constructive role in the process, in addition to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). The United Nations must be actively involved in the follow-up to the peace process. It was important that the resolutions drafted regarding the situation in the Middle East should adequately reflect the momentous developments in the region.

6. Mr. BAHADIAN (Brazil) said that the 1993 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council had been held under the revised format agreed on under the restructuring and revitalization process. Therefore, it was appropriate to take stock of the results in order to provide input to the ongoing reform process. Some degree of confusion seemed to persist regarding the exact nature of the high-level and coordination segments. His delegation concurred that the President's summary of the high-level segment should reflect the thrust of the discussions only and should not constitute any kind of legislative mandate or binding agreement among members. Agreed conclusions, however, did represent a clear set of directives to the system with evident legislative authority. That format demanded, therefore, an open and transparent negotiating process so that it could faithfully reflect the consensus of the member States. Further progress was needed in the evolution from the traditional format of prepared statements to a genuine and free exchange of views during the high-level segment.

7. The experience of the most recent session of the Council seemed to indicate that "expertization" of its subsidiary bodies had not greatly enhanced their efficiency and effectiveness. It could be concluded that agreements reached at the level of subsidiary bodies had very little value, as it appeared that they were often renegotiated at the plenary meetings. Serious consideration must be given to the future path of the reform process. His delegation also hoped that a consensus could be achieved quickly on draft resolution A/47/L.58/Rev.1. The Committee should concentrate its efforts on determining clearly the relationship between the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies and laying out precise guidelines for the format, nature and scope of the reports submitted by those bodies to the Council.

8. Mr. BLANEY (United States of America) said that, at the 1993 regular session of the Economic and Social Council, progress had been achieved in the coordination of humanitarian assistance. Positive steps had also been taken to improve coordination of the HIV/AIDS control effort within the United Nations system. His delegation underscored its support for Council resolution 1993/51

(Mr. Blaney, United States)

which requested the World Health Assembly to study the feasibility of a joint and co-sponsored United Nations programme on HIV and AIDS as a means of ensuring that all relevant agencies played their appropriate roles. The Council had continued to eschew ideological debates on the substance of issues already reviewed in subsidiary bodies and had acted as a pragmatic coordinating body, as envisioned in the Charter.

9. His Government wished to clarify its position regarding the granting of consultative status to non-governmental organizations at activities related to the Economic and Social Council. At the 1993 regular session, the United States Government had joined the majority of member States in voting to approve the Council's endorsement of the recommendation to grant consultative status to the International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA). It had recently learned, however, that an organization called the "North American Man Boy Love Association" (NAMBLA), whose primary purpose was to advocate paedophilia, a form of child abuse opposed by all members of the international community, was a member of ILGA. Had his delegation known that NAMBLA was a member of ILGA, it would not have supported the recommendation to grant it official status. In the event that his Government did not obtain a satisfactory clarification of the matter from ILGA, it was its intent to move at the next resumed or regular session of the Council to change its vote on that issue. Nevertheless, the United States continued to believe that non-governmental organizations contributed important resources in terms of expertise, personnel, data and alternative perspectives from which all members could benefit as they worked towards mutual understanding and resolution of global problems.

10. Mr. YEGOROV (Belarus) said that efforts to improve the organization of work of the Economic and Social Council should continue and that talks on the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields should be resumed. Greater account should be taken of the useful proposals which had been made, including the proposal by the Secretary-General that the Economic and Social Council should report to the Security Council on situations which threatened international peace and security.

11. The results achieved at the Council's latest session again demonstrated the importance of selecting internationally significant themes involving the activities of a number of specialized agencies for consideration at the high-level and coordination segments. Attention should also be given to the recommendations contained in Council resolution 1993/61 on strengthening the role of the regional commissions.

12. His delegation welcomed the broad support expressed for the results of the first session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, and the adoption of the resolutions on scientific and technological aspects of the conversion of military capacity for civilian use and sustainable development (1993/70), on strengthening the role of the Commission on Transnational Corporations (1993/49) and on the 1993 System of National Accounts (1993/5), and of decisions 1993/328 and 1993/232 on preparations for the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction and on strengthening of international cooperation and coordination of efforts to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster. It also welcomed the proposals made to enhance coordination of the

(Mr. Yegorov, Belarus)

activities of the three States concerned, the United Nations, non-governmental organizations and business and scientific circles.

13. Mr. ALIOU (Cameroon), noting that Cameroon would be hosting the Fifth General Conference of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), said that one of the challenges facing the international community was to find ways of putting an end to the disparities and deprivations which were the lot of a vast majority of the world's population. The importance of industrial development in the process of bringing about a more prosperous, equitable and stable world order could not be overemphasized. Council resolution 1993/62 emphasized the importance of industrialization in the development of Africa and the role of UNIDO in that process. It also stressed the importance of a constructive dialogue between industrialized and developing countries, taking into account the aspirations and legitimate interests of Africa in the area of industrialization.

14. Mr. RAMADAN (Egypt) welcomed the adoption of Council decision 1993/207 on the establishment of the Commission on Sustainable Development, resolutions 1993/4 and 1993/76 concerning the International Conference on Population and Development. In particular he welcomed the recommendation contained in resolution 1993/76 that the Preparatory Committee for the International Conference on Population and Development should become a subsidiary body of the General Assembly.

15. There was growing concern over the widening gap between the advanced and the developing countries. The United Nations was called upon to assume its responsibilities under Chapter IX of the Charter to promote higher standards of living, solutions of international economic and social problems and universal respect for human rights. The Economic and Social Council, pursuant to its mandate under Article 62 of the Charter, was called upon to use its full powers to ensure the stability necessary for peaceful relations between States.

16. With regard to restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields, and the draft resolution contained in document A/47/L.58/Rev.1, his delegation agreed that the Economic and Social Council should have a greater role with respect to coordination of the specialized agencies.

17. Revitalization of the Economic and Social Council required effective support for the regional commissions and their programmes. His delegation had been concerned at the ambiguity of certain resolutions on the regional commissions considered at the substantive session. The Economic Commission for Africa played an important role in implementing the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s and in supporting African regional integration and urged all countries to support the regional commissions.

18. The contents of the report on the economic and social consequences of the establishment of settlements by Israel in the Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, occupied since 1967, and the Syrian Golan (A/48/188) were cause for great concern. Egypt welcomed the recent Palestinian-Israeli agreement as a positive step, which should be accompanied by fundamental changes in the

(Mr. Ramadan, Egypt)

previous detrimental practices, and should have a positive impact on the situation in the occupied territories.

19. It was regrettable that the Committee formerly known as the Committee on the Development and Utilization of New and Renewable Sources of Energy had not met since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 46/235 on 13 April 1992; that did not reflect well on the interest of the international community in that important topic.

20. Finally, he expressed dissatisfaction with the current late issuance of documents. There could be no fruitful discussion of agenda items when the relevant documents were not distributed until the morning of the debate.

21. Mr. ALDOSARI (Bahrain) said that the sheer diversity of the economic and social problems facing the world made it imperative to focus on priority issues. In order to streamline the work of the Economic and Social Council it was essential to keep the agenda under control, rationalize documentation and ensure constant coordination with other United Nations bodies and agencies, in particular the General Assembly.

22. His delegation hoped that the specialized agencies would coordinate their policies and activities so that the goals of the forthcoming conferences dealing respectively with population and development, social development and women could be achieved. He endorsed the activities of the specialized agencies in support of national efforts aimed at increasing economic effectiveness and sustainable growth and development through privatization, and also welcomed the exchange of information between Member States on that subject. He called for better coordination of humanitarian assistance and enhanced preparedness, capacity-building and planning in that regard, and for prompt measures to ensure effective emergency information management and to strengthen response capacity. His country endorsed the goals of the updated global AIDS strategy.

23. It was time to strengthen the foundations of peace and stability in the Middle East in order to achieve development in that region and, in that connection, his delegation supported the General Assembly resolutions calling for assistance to the Palestinian people and the implementation of development projects in the occupied Palestinian territory.

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
14th meeting
held on
Tuesday, 19 October 1993
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 14th MEETING

Chairman:	Mr. MONGBE	(Benin)
later:	Mr. RYSINSKI (Vice-Chairman)	(Poland)
later:	Mr. MONGBE (Chairman)	(Benin)

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AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued)

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Distr. GENERAL
A/C.2/48/SR.14
17 November 1993
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

93-81702 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued) (A/48/3, A/48/159-E/1993/59, A/48/172, A/48/182, A/48/183-E/1993/74 and Add.1, A/48/188-E/1993/78, A/48/276, A/48/338, A/48/353-S/26372, A/48/484-S/26552, A/48/498)

1. Mr. ANDREEV (Bulgaria) noted that the deliberations on the report of the Economic and Social Council coincided with restructuring of the economic and social sector of the United Nations, which would be decisive for the overall strengthening of the Council. The past two years had been marked by considerable progress in that respect, and the Council's regular session of 1993 had been a further step forward in that direction.

2. The discussions held during the high-level segment of the Council under the important item entitled "World Summit for Social Development, including the role of the United Nations system in promoting social development" were particularly important, for they had done much to specify further how the Summit could interlink the social aspects of development with the problems of enhancing economic efficiency and ensuring favourable conditions for political democracy. Those issues were particularly relevant to countries which, like Bulgaria, were undertaking radical economic and political reforms and acutely felt the need for an integrated political, economic, social and environmental approach.

3. The participation of high-level representatives of United Nations specialized agencies in the coordination and operational activities segments had made a positive contribution to the identification of ways and means of improving cross-sectoral coordination. That would help to strengthen the Organization's capacity to respond in emergency situations and to devise appropriate policies for preventing and controlling diseases which were particularly severe in some parts of the world.

4. Regarding the United Nations system for operational activities and the steps taken to make it more responsive to the needs of Member States in the new international environment, it was important to determine the structure of the governing councils of the various funds and programmes promptly in order to make the system more operational as soon as possible. Bulgaria supported the view that, given the increase in technical assistance requirements in the current circumstances, the future functioning of the system would depend largely on the mobilization of adequate resources. The effective and prompt implementation of General Assembly resolution 47/199 of 22 December 1992 was thus to be commended. Bulgaria also supported the view that the system should pay due attention to the problems of the countries undertaking radical economic reforms.

5. Within the broader context of collective action to restructure the economic and social sector and adapt it to the new contemporary realities, the decentralization and enhancing of the role of regional and interregional cooperation was particularly important. His delegation attached great importance to the activities of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and to strengthening the Commission's role in enhancing pan-European economic cooperation. Bulgaria was interested in actively participating in ECE programmes and activities at the regional level, including those relating to

(Mr. Andreev, Bulgaria)

environmental protection, the development of transport and transport infrastructure, statistics and trade facilitation.

6. His delegation wished to echo previous delegations which had expressed concern at the late distribution of documents.

7. Mr. HUARAKA (Namibia) said that annual economic statistics did not accurately reflect his country's socio-economic status because they did not show the distortions, caused by measures taken by the previous apartheid regime, in Namibia's economic development, which had been skewed in favour of the white population.

8. In the past, the structural flaws in the development of Namibia and the discriminatory nature of that development had distorted per capita income to such an extent that continued special assistance to Namibia on a scale comparable to that provided to a least developed country was strongly justified.

9. Development agencies which based their financing decisions on income distribution indexes such as per capita income should not overlook the structural economic distortions with which Namibia was faced, a legacy that had left certain sectors of the population at a severe disadvantage while favouring a small minority.

10. Actually, there were two Namibias: one modern and the other traditional, one developed and the other underdeveloped. In 1990, Namibia's gross domestic product (GDP) had been $1.84 billion, which represented a per capita income of $1,314. On the basis of that income level, Namibia was classified as a middle-income country. That income level, however, concealed an extremely dualistic society, with sharp differences in economic conditions and living standards.

11. The modern sector employed approximately 45 per cent of the Namibian population (5 per cent white and 40 per cent black). The per capita income of the white portion of the modern economic sector was about $16,500 per year, while that of the black portion was only $85 per year. Roughly 5 per cent of the population earned 70 per cent of GDP, while the poorest 55 per cent earned only 3 per cent.

12. In Namibia there were two kinds of poverty: extreme degrees of income disparity and widespread absolute poverty. A conservative estimate of absolute poverty suggested that at least two thirds of the total population lived in absolute poverty and that as much as three quarters of the black population was poor. Female-headed households (40 per cent of poor households) comprised the poorest sector. Health indicators were also low because of the existence of widespread poverty and the fact that the pre-independence health care system had not encouraged preventive care, and because health delivery services were not community-oriented. Adult illiteracy was estimated at 60 per cent. There was also a severe housing shortage.

13. While Namibia had indisputably achieved a remarkable degree of democracy and stability in only three years of independence, the disparity in living standards and opportunities between different groups in Namibian society, the varying degrees of access to public services, the disadvantaged position of

(Mr. Huaraka, Namibia)

women, the rate of population growth, high unemployment and the differences between living standards in rural and urban areas demonstrated its economic underdevelopment.

14. His delegation appreciated the efforts made by Member States and the United Nations system and other donor agencies in rendering assistance to Namibia pursuant to General Assembly resolution 46/204 of 20 December 1991. However, as the report of the Secretary-General (A/48/498) rightly noted, "The factors that contributed to the adoption of resolution 46/204 are long-lasting and cannot be changed or modified easily in the short run. Given the situation that the majority of the Namibian population have incomes that are far below the national average, and this is in spite of the existence of a few people who enjoy a very high standard of living, it is necessary for the United Nations to continue to give Namibia the 'as if' LDC status to facilitate the country's efforts at mobilizing development resources."

15. Mr. KIM Mun Dok (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that his delegation wished to associate itself with the statement made at the 12th meeting by the representative of Colombia on behalf of the Group of 77 on the important issues relating to the item under discussion. During its recent session, the Economic and Social Council had undertaken the first high-level consideration of preparations for the World Summit for Social Development, including a discussion of the role of the United Nations in encouraging social development.

16. The Summit should not become another typical North-South summit, but should make a real contribution to closing the growing gap between the world's rich and poor. It was important for the developed countries to accept the economic realities of global interdependence and the right of developing countries to develop without having additional conditions imposed on them. Any international efforts to promote social and economic development should respect the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of Member States, their sovereignty and territorial integrity and the right of every State to determine its political system freely.

17. Careful consideration should be given to the proposals to institute annual meetings between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council and to invite the latter to submit reports to the Security Council on economic and social developments, as those arrangements might create unexpected problems for the States Members of the United Nations.

18. Restructuring of the economic and social sectors should not entail a reduction in the financial resources allocated for operational activities. The shrinkage of those resources and the failure of the developed countries to honour their commitments under Agenda 21 were a source of concern for the developing countries.

19. His delegation had been a sponsor of the resolution on "The need to harmonize and improve United Nations informatics systems for optimal utilization and accessibility by all States", adopted by the Council at its 1993 substantive session, because his country considered it very important for the missions of Member States to be able to retrieve the information they needed from United

(Mr. Kim Mun Dok, Democratic People's Republic of Korea)

Nations databases. Doing so might alleviate the problem of late documentation to some extent. In 1992, several delegations had expressed their concern at not being able to use their conventional equipment to access the optical disk system at Headquarters; it was to be hoped that the Secretariat would find a solution to that problem.

20. During the Council's consideration of statistical and cartographic questions, his country had urged Japan to rename the "Sea of Japan" immediately and to respond to the proposal to hold talks between the parties concerned in order to find a just solution to the question, as had been suggested by the United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names. Calling the sea between Korea and Japan the "Sea of Japan" was irrational. That sea had been called the "East Sea" from ancient times, until Japan had imposed colonial rule over Korea and had forced even Koreans to go by Japanese names. The Korean people called it the "East Korea Sea" or the "East Sea".

21. Delegations from both the north and south of Korea had raised that issue at international gatherings, including regional conferences. His delegation once again urged the Japanese delegation to respond positively to the calls of the Korean people for a solution to that issue - a remnant of Japanese colonial rule, which had imposed nearly half a century of misfortune and suffering on Koreans.

22. Mr. Rysinski (Poland), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

23. Mr. RATUNACEVA (Fiji) said that his delegation supported the efforts that had been made to strengthen the role of the Economic and Social Council and hoped that further measures would be taken to enable the Council to play an important role in the field of international economic cooperation and the management of operational activities. The United Nations had a tremendous responsibility for safeguarding international peace and security, but peace and stability could be undermined if the root causes of socio-economic problems were not addressed. Alleviating poverty and improving access to education, health, nutrition and employment ought to receive the same priority as questions of international peace and security.

24. The Council's focus on the World Summit for Social Development was most appropriate, since 1.3 billion people lived in poverty, more than 30,000 children died each day from malnutrition and disease, 300 million children did not attend school and 1.3 billion people lacked access to safe drinking water. His delegation trusted that the high-level discussion at the recent session would help the Preparatory Committee for the World Summit to prepare for that meeting and to draft appropriate recommendations. It also hoped that the theme for the 1994 high-level segment would be equally relevant.

25. The policy dialogue with the executive heads of multilateral financial and trade institutions during the high-level segment should become standard practice for the sessions, since it would help the Council to carry out its policy-formulation functions. During the coordination segment, the Council had discussed the coordination of policies and activities of the various United Nations agencies in the fields of humanitarian relief and control of malaria and

(Mr. Ratunaceva, Fiji)

diarrhoeal diseases. Coordinating the various elements of the emergency relief systems was essential to the development of effective mechanisms to respond to all emergencies. His delegation hoped that such exchanges of views would continue to figure on the Council's agenda so that duplication of efforts and waste of resources could be minimized.

26. Fiji saw great merit in the proposal to convene joint annual meetings of the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council for the purpose of reviewing the economic and social issues facing the international community. However, the proposal to invite the Economic and Social Council to report to the Security Council on economic and social situations that threatened international peace and security required much closer examination. His delegation was not convinced that such an exercise would be very useful.

27. With regard to the operational activities segment, his delegation believed that, through its contacts with national officials, the United Nations was in a position to provide demand-driven development assistance. In that connection, the country strategy note gave the United Nations system an excellent guide for providing a more coherent response to the plans and priorities of Governments. At the same time, the note could ensure that the principles of various international agreements were incorporated in the national plans. However, it should be prepared by Governments and should be structured so that United Nations assistance was efficiently integrated into the national development process.

28. Mr. Mongbe (Benin) resumed the Chair.

29. Mr. AL-HABIB (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council had reviewed the role of the United Nations system in enhancing international cooperation for development. That role was particularly important at a time when sustained economic growth and development were perceived as prerequisites for international peace and security.

30. The new structure of the Economic and Social Council was well suited to policy coordination. It was regrettable to note, however, that the high-level segment had not yet fully realized its role or its potential contribution to the global economy. Reducing the size of the international bodies might enhance their efficiency, but it should be borne in mind that those bodies represented different interests throughout the world. Reducing their size might lead to the exclusion of many small countries from the programmes and funds in future.

31. The coordination of the various specialized agencies and programmes was a necessary element for successful action and better results. However, better coordination required changes in those agencies, and the Council could play an important role in effecting those changes. In that regard, General Assembly resolution 47/199 of 22 December 1992 was a good basis for improving coordination among the agencies working in the field of operational activities for development.

32. Mr. WIBISONO (Indonesia) noted that the Council, at its substantive session in 1993, had achieved a large measure of convergence on the analysis and prognosis of the current world social situation and the preparation of the World

(Mr. Wibisono, Indonesia)

Summit for Social Development. Given the global nature of the poverty crisis, the changing concept and emerging consensus on development and the increased awareness of the indivisibility of peace, security and development, the World Summit for Social Development was extremely opportune. The Summit should formulate concrete and far-reaching solutions to eliminate poverty and should seek ways and means of resolving the unemployment question. If those two fundamental questions were not resolved, increasing numbers of people would be marginalized and the fragile social situation in many countries would be seriously endangered. Thus, the approach adopted should be one of putting people first, taking into account the right to work and the right to develop.

33. The economic and cultural diversity that defined the present world should be fully taken into account in the preparatory process and at the Summit itself. Since each country and region was unique, a uniform strategy might be counterproductive. The United Nations could therefore serve as a catalyst for cooperation and as a source of financial and technical assistance in the area of social development. The specialized agencies had an important role to play, in particular the International Labour Organization with regard to the question of employment.

34. His delegation supported the Council's agreed conclusions on humanitarian assistance, especially the emphasis on the important leadership role of the Secretary-General, through the Emergency Relief Coordinator working closely with him in coordinating a coherent and timely humanitarian response to major and complex emergencies and natural disasters. At the same time, he stressed the need to address root causes in the search for a more durable solution.

35. Indonesia supported the call of the Group of 77 and China for a substantial increase in resources for operational activities for development. If current problems were not resolved, the capacity of the United Nations for delivering essential services would be severely jeopardized. Since a stable economy and a stable political order could not be built in an unstable society, both aspects must be accorded equal attention. His delegation therefore believed that the World Summit for Social Development was imperative and that it was essential for all countries fully to participate in the preparatory process so that common interests could be built upon and mutual understanding increased, in keeping with the mandate of the Charter to achieve "higher standards of living".

36. Mr. SHAREIM (Observer for Palestine) said that the report of the Secretary-General (A/48/188-E/1993/78) contained a detailed examination of the economic and social repercussions of the establishment of settlements by Israel in the occupied Palestinian territory. Those settlements were illegal and were one of the largest obstacles to the achievement of a lasting and comprehensive solution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. They were a flagrant violation of the fourth Geneva Convention and the relevant resolutions of United Nations bodies, in particular Security Council resolution 465 (1980).

37. The Israeli policies, motivated by dominance and occupation and aimed at attaining full control of the Palestinian territory, had forced the Palestinian people to leave the areas that Israel wished to occupy and diverted Palestinian natural resources to Israeli benefit. With the signing by both parties of the Declaration of Principles, which recognized the Palestinian people and their

(Mr. Shareim, Observer, Palestine)

legitimate rights, it was logical to expect that the stage was set for the abolishment of the ideological basis for that policy. The West Bank and Gaza Strip were not Judea and Samaria, and the settlements could not be considered to be security measures for Israel: on the contrary, they constituted a threat to peace in the region. Those policies belonged to the past and should not be taken into the upcoming era.

38. Palestine trusted that the Israeli Government would immediately cease all settlement activities and discontinue all privileges being extended to the settlers, which would be considered a confidence-building measure on the part of the Israelis and would facilitate the implementation of the agreement. His delegation believed that any continuation of the settlement activities was in direct contradiction to the agreement.

39. The international community should continue linking assistance to Israel to the status of those settlement activities, since any final settlement of the conflict should include a fair solution to the problem of the settlements. He sincerely hoped that the Committee would give full support to the draft resolution that his delegation would be introducing with regard to that issue.

40. The occupation had led to the impoverishment of the Palestinian people and caused them to endure many hardships. There must be a broad and continuous international effort to compensate them for their immense losses. Palestine had welcomed the conference to support Middle East peace, held in Washington, D.C., on 1 October 1993, as a first step which should be followed by direct and practical measures for the immediate implementation of its results. Donor countries should take into account the uniqueness of the Palestinian situation and channel their assistance through the official Palestinian institutions.

41. Palestine, which was confident that its institutions would be able to establish a prompt and effective mechanism for the implementation of assistance programmes, called on the United Nations system to begin, without delay, a coordinated effort to assist the Palestinian people and to establish a direct and official presence in the Palestinian territory in order to participate in the process of building the new Palestinian society. Palestine welcomed the steps taken by the Secretary-General in dispatching a mission to assess the measures to be applied by the United Nations. It also called on the donor countries generously to support those programmes.

42. Peace and security could not survive for long without the existence of economic stability and security. Palestine was working towards peace based on economic welfare for its people and neighbours, and for equitable relationships free of political and economic dependence. On that basis, it would be submitting a draft resolution on assistance to the Palestinian people that would take into account the recent positive developments and the good intentions that the international community had expressed in supporting the Palestinian people and their needs and priorities. He hoped that the Committee would send a clear and unambiguous message to the Palestinian people in the occupied territory by fully supporting that resolution and adopting it by consensus.

43. Mr. SHINODA (Japan), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, referred to the remarks of the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of

(Mr. Shinoda, Japan)

Korea concerning the Sea of Japan and said that that term was well established and accepted by the international community. There was no need to change it, either totally or partially. The position of the Government of Japan on the issue was quite clear.

44. Mr. KIM Mun Dok (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that the term Sea of Japan had not been accepted, recognized or imposed by any international conference or convention. On the contrary, many of the delegations that had participated in the Sixth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, held in 1992, had urged the parties concerned to begin negotiations to find an equitable solution to the problem. The most reasonable approach, therefore, would be for Japan to agree to consider possibilities for reconciliation.

45. The CHAIRMAN said that the general debate on agenda item 12 was concluded.

The meeting rose at 4.10 p.m.